



Speech Module

CIVIL CANADA:

Among the best places in the world to live

Canada has an unsurpassed lifestyle that keeps getting better. For seven straight years, the United Nations ranked Canada as the country with the best quality of life in the world. The good news is already here: Canada's way of life is rated tops by the UN. The best news is that all the requirements are in place to make Canadian life even better. Our rankings in terms of life expectancy at birth and school enrolment went up, while the long-term unemployment rate and percentage of Canadians living below the poverty line went down.

For four years in a row, Canada ranked first on the Gender Development Index. This measures women's progress in achieving the same levels as men for literacy, education, life expectancy at birth, and income. Underlying this achievement is the fact that the percentage of Canadian women who are professional and technical workers increased from 51.1 percent to 52.2 percent. The UN study tells us much about what we have accomplished.

Canada is experiencing the growth of harmonious and progressive communities. The knowledge economy is giving rise to whole new fields of industrial endeavour. As a result, the Canadian economy has moved away from its former reliance on commodities. As a share of exports, commodities fell from almost 60 percent in 1980 to about 30 percent in 1999.

The Government of Canada continues to support these innovative sectors. This past year, Industry Canada offered a one-time \$140 million grant to Genome Canada.

We are working hard to create the kind of business environment that fosters innovation. In a recent speech, Canada's Finance Minister, Paul Martin announced, "We want to build an economy that attracts talent like a magnet attracts metal. To lead the world. To set the pace. And to build from this revolution's promise an even greater prosperity."

